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Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance

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Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations

Report of the Secretary-General***

Summary

The present report addresses the theme of "strengthening of the coordination of United Nations humanitarian assistance, including capacity and organizational aspects". It examines some of the key humanitarian developments and challenges, particularly capacity gaps experienced in both complex emergencies and disasters during the past year. The report also analyses the implementation and impact of Economic and Social Council resolutions 2002/32, 2003/5 and 2004/50 with a view to strengthening the policy guidance such resolutions provide to the international community on humanitarian issues and activities. Finally, the report briefly discusses the roles of and complementarity among relevant United Nations entities in the area of multidimensional missions and follows up this and other issues with a set of observations and recommendations from the Secretary-General to both the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly for further strengthening the coordination of humanitarian assistance of the United Nations.

* A/60/50 and Corr.1.
** E/2005/100.
*** The report was delayed for technical reasons.

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I. Introduction

1. The present report has been prepared in compliance with General Assembly resolution 46/182 of 19 December 1991, in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report annually to the Assembly and the Economic and Social Council on the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance. Moreover, it is submitted in compliance with the requests contained in General Assembly resolution 59/141 of 15 December 2004 and Economic and Social Council resolution 2004/50 of 23 July 2004 on strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations.

II. Humanitarian developments

2. The level and scale of violence witnessed during the past few years in Afghanistan, Iraq, Darfur (the Sudan) and in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is evidence that threats to human security are prevalent and continue to take an unprecedented toll on human life. That an earthquake in the Indian Ocean could trigger simultaneous emergencies in 12 separate countries and cause the largest single loss of life in places as far away as Sweden confirms that the impact of humanitarian crises is more far-reaching than ever before. Such large-scale conflicts and disasters have tested humanitarian response capacity to the limits and have challenged the ability of the humanitarian system to guarantee that such a response is effectively and appropriately applied. The expectation that larger and more visible crises will require greater capacity, quality and accountability in humanitarian response requires that the United Nations system examine — and strengthen — its current systems, tools and competencies. And the recognition that threats to human security are global and interconnected requires that humanitarian crises be tackled with common actions and joint resolve.

A. Overview

3. The Consolidated Humanitarian Appeal for 2005 reported that 26 million persons in 20 crises worldwide need US$ 4.5 billion in humanitarian assistance. Though this represents a decrease in the overall number of humanitarian crises during the past year, the financial requirements to address these crises are 25 per cent higher ($3.4 billion) — a testament that the last 12 months have witnessed a series of particularly large and destructive humanitarian crises.

4. The massive earthquake that took place off the coast of Sumatra, Indonesia, on 26 December 2004 and the resulting tsunami unleashed a series of major disasters across more than 12 nations, killing more than 240,000 persons and displacing well over a million. The hurricanes that struck the Caribbean in the fall of 2004 were the strongest storms in a decade, wreaking havoc on numerous small island developing States, many of which were unprepared for the level of devastation such storms would bring. Despite considerable early warnings, a swarm of desert locusts infested 10 different west and north African countries and decimated millions of hectares of crops in the summer of 2004. Thirty-five epidemics broke out worldwide, including polio, meningitis and tropical ulcers in the Central African Republic and an intense outbreak of the Marburg virus in Angola. The spectre of the

avian flu threatens parts of Asia with possible dire humanitarian consequences. Though the effects of disasters are difficult to measure, using preliminary figures compiled by the Collaborating Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters, it is estimated that in 2004 alone there were 360 disasters affecting more than 145 million persons and causing more than $103 billion in material damage.

5. Ongoing and indiscriminate fighting continues to escalate throughout the Darfur states, resulting in looting, burning of villages and killings, and includes a high incidence of violence against women and girls and deliberate attacks against aid workers. Such insecurity has displaced more than 2.4 million persons and continues to restrict the delivery of humanitarian aid — as of April 2005, 17 per cent of the region remained inaccessible to humanitarian actors, though humanitarian needs remain high. The World Food Programme estimates that 3.25 million persons in Darfur require humanitarian assistance in 2005; this is likely to increase as populations suffer the effects of drought. Access will be further complicated by the coming rainy season that will make it very difficult for aid agencies to deliver food over the region's inadequate roads. Additionally, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) reports that since the end of 2002, the number of Sudanese refugees in Chad increased from 13,000 to 225,000, raising tensions between refugee and host communities as they compete for water, firewood and grazing land.

6. Remnants of civil strife and disagreements over the distribution of tsunami aid in Sri Lanka, rising tensions between the Government and Maoist insurgents in Nepal and failed peace negotiations, disarmament programmes and prevailing insecurity in West Africa, are undermining humanitarian efforts to assist civilian populations in many areas, pitching these countries towards humanitarian crises on a larger scale. Zimbabwe is this year suffering the worst food shortages in three years as a result of drought, acute shortages of agricultural inputs and a controlled price structure. Official sources indicate that maize production is below 500,000 tonnes, less than one third of the annual requirements of 1.8 million tonnes; the Government has provisionally indicated that 2.4 million of the most vulnerable people are currently in need of food aid.

7. In several areas of the world, refugees have been able to find a solution to their plight. According to UNHCR, the global number of refugees, excluding 4.1 million Palestinians assisted by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, is an estimated 9.3 million in 2004 — the lowest level since 1980. An estimated 1.5 million refugees worldwide were able to return to Afghanistan (940,000), Angola (90,000), Burundi (90,000), Iraq (194,000) and Liberia (57,000). However, almost 400,000 asylum requests were registered in 50, mostly industrialized, countries in Asia, Europe and North America in 2004.

8. Of continued concern is the number of internally displaced persons, which far outnumber recognized refugees: today 25 million persons remain displaced by war and human rights abuses in about 49 countries; from 70 to 80 per cent of them are women and children. An additional 25 million persons have been displaced by natural disasters. These numbers have remained virtually unchanged since 2000.

B. A case for Africa

9. Prospects for peace in nine African countries, including the resolution of the long-standing crisis in Angola and Sierra Leone, and the promise of the formation of the Transitional Federal Government in Somalia, present potential opportunities to make progress on the humanitarian front. In addition, several regional and subregional organizations, such as the African Union, the Economic Community of West African States, the South African Development Community and its New Partnership for African Development initiative, are making great strides in promoting humanitarian assistance, peace, security and sustainable development in a number of countries across the region.

10. However, high levels of humanitarian needs persist, the challenges involved in addressing such needs remain significant and attempts to exploit such opportunities and effectively engage regional, subregional and national institutions to address these needs have not worked. If the humanitarian system is serious about ending suffering in Africa, it must be more systematic in the way it approaches humanitarian crises there. This includes taking focused and coordinated steps to identify the level of need, to build, re-establish and employ indigenous early warning, preparedness and response capacity and to commit to funding such initiatives in an equitable and predictable way.

11. Today, many parts of Africa are dominated by several crises of protection and displacement, where acute insecurity and increased violence against civilians in many areas are preventing humanitarian agencies from delivering basic services to vulnerable populations. In Darfur, the escalation of fighting, high levels of sexual and gender-based violence and the deliberate targeting and killing of humanitarian staff have dramatically reduced the ability of the humanitarian community to provide assistance and address protection concerns throughout the crisis. In northern Uganda, an increase in violence and brutal killings, abductions, rapes and attacks by the Lord's Resistance Army is preventing humanitarian agencies from expanding basic services to 1.4 million internally displaced persons. In addition, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) estimates that about 20,000 children have been abducted since 1986, serving as soldiers, porters and sex slaves, and 35,000 children continue to travel by night to avoid abduction. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the World Health Organization estimates that nearly 40,000 women and men, girls and boys have become victims of sexual and gender-based violence, compounding the human impact of a conflict that has killed more than 3.8 million civilians since 1998. In Togo, violence following the outcome of the presidential elections has triggered refugee movements (34,000 persons) to Benin and Ghana. The number of internally displaced persons is unknown.

12. The African Union has been instrumental in enhancing the protection of civilians in Darfur, as it has provided protection in displacement camps and along routes used for the collection of firewood and water and has usefully ensured a proper balance of female police officers to assist in cases of sexual violence. Substantially increasing the levels of deployment of the African Union would go a long way to improving protection to civilians in Darfur. Such practices should be replicated in other contexts.

13. Successive seasons of drought in the Horn of Africa and in southern Africa have led to loss of assets and livestock and to severe food insecurity, requiring acute

and coordinated interventions to address the underlying problems in these regions. In Eritrea alone, close to 60 per cent of the population requires food assistance and the maternal malnutrition rate of 53 per cent is among the highest in the world. In southern Africa, where some areas received as little as 10 per cent of normal rainfall between mid-January and mid-March, reports of crop failures are already becoming more and more disturbing; Malawi, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Swaziland and parts of Mozambique seem worst affected. The AIDS epidemic there has only compounded humanitarian needs and increased vulnerability to drought cycles: UNICEF estimates that 4 million children orphaned by HIV/AIDS live with little access to the basics for survival; the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations estimates that countries affected by the AIDS pandemic could lose 13 to 26 per cent of their agricultural labour force by the year 2020.

14. Broad-based efforts, such as under Ethiopia's Coalition for Food and Livelihood Security, have begun to address response to drought and climate fluctuations through innovative insurance mechanisms. In southern Africa, high degrees of collaboration across the United Nations and with other stakeholders, including national Governments, donors and the Southern African Development Community non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have been instrumental in preventing increases in acute malnutrition and deaths arising from hunger. However, overall levels of vulnerability are increasing in both these areas in the absence of urgent and acute interventions, requiring that coordinated and sustained engagement through these initiatives continues.

15. The locust invasion in the summer of 2004, while preventable, attests to the fact that the critical capacity that once existed in Africa has been lost or eroded. The magnitude of the locust swarm that descended upon the Sahel region of Africa overwhelmed local response capability, as many of the affected countries had not faced locust problems for over 15 years. Although the United Nations had long promoted the development of the Emergency Prevention System (EMPRES) to address such a situation, the programme in west and north-west Africa is still not operational because of the lack of donor support. Though efforts are under way to contain future locust infestations, the desert swarms will most likely form again in north-west Africa at the beginning of the summer of 2005. It is therefore essential to expand the early warning capacities and build and maintain operational capacity on the ground to reduce the scale and impact of future swarms.

16. Despite both high levels of need alongside promising opportunities, funding levels for the United Nations consolidated appeals as of May 2005 demonstrate that donors still approach humanitarian crises with insufficient resources and an uneven hand. Of the 14 appeals for Africa, 8 have received less than 20 per cent of requirements so far. And with the exception of a small flash appeal for Angola, none have received more than 40 per cent. These funding imbalances are neither new nor aberrant: an analysis of the financial tracking system for the past three years suggests that resources that pay for prominent crises (Afghanistan, Iraq, the Indian Ocean tsunami) are indeed diverted from other areas and that promises to replenish aid budgets depleted by large-scale crises are not generally kept. These concerns also apply to the chronic, uneven funding of certain neglected sectors. Such funding levels and patterns are unacceptable if Africa is to be a global humanitarian priority, as stated by so many on so many occasions. What is needed is a "new deal" for humanitarian assistance in which the donors, for their part, develop less restrictive mechanisms for the disbursements of humanitarian assistance in exchange for

humanitarian organizations agreeing to operate against agreed benchmarks as to the scale, speed and intensity of response.

III. Strengthening humanitarian capacity

17. Recent events have demonstrated that the humanitarian community is capable of launching a massive response, when called upon. However, it has become equally apparent that the quality of such a response cannot always be guaranteed: humanitarian response does not always meet the basic needs of affected populations in a timely way, response varies considerably from crisis to crisis and current capacity levels are not always sufficient to meet the demands of major emergencies occurring at the same time. While some of the factors affecting response are specific to individual crises — such as the lack of access and obstruction of aid — some of the key challenges seem to be systemic in nature.

18. The ongoing crisis in the Darfur region of the Sudan demonstrated early on the difficulties of mobilizing capacity in a complex environment and continues to underscore some fundamental weaknesses in the capacity of the humanitarian response system. For example, when the humanitarian community was authorized to respond to the crisis in Darfur, a rapid and robust response was not entirely forthcoming. Bureaucratic measures taken by the Government and the escalation of fighting by both rebel groups and Government forces delayed the early deployment of humanitarian staff. However, even when the situation stabilized, the humanitarian system was unable to quickly mobilize substantial amounts of emergency funds or field appropriately skilled and seasoned staff. And while, over time, the humanitarian community has made progress in addressing the mandate and gaps and technical weaknesses in certain sectors — water and sanitation, shelter, protection and internally displaced persons camp management — coverage in these areas remains uneven.

19. The tsunami response also highlighted some key areas where response capacity could be strengthened. For example, the leadership and performance of the resident coordinators, who acted as humanitarian coordinators, varied from country to country. Some critical common services were slow to mobilize and pre-existing standby arrangements with Governments, notably the United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination teams system and the International Humanitarian Partnership, while useful, might have benefited from better coordination and a broader range of staff and expertise. Well-known sectoral weaknesses became evident almost immediately and coordination, particularly in the health sector, was patchy. Coordination among NGOs and between NGOs and the United Nations was poor. And in recent months, as the response has shifted from relief to recovery and rehabilitation, it is clear that there is a need to improve the system's ability to focus on social and economic rehabilitation alongside infrastructure projects.

20. These and other crises also demonstrate that the humanitarian system has not been entirely successful at tapping into the often significant capacity that does exist, particularly at regional and national levels. National and local leadership of the relief and recovery effort following the December 2003 earthquake in Bam, Iran, was critical to immediate life-saving efforts as well as the smooth progress to the recovery phase. Similarly, countries such as Jamaica and Cuba were able to minimize the damage caused by the 2004 hurricane season because of effective

national and community programmes that allowed them to initiate evacuation, the provision of shelter and the management of relief supplies. The African Union has been vital to establishing the conditions necessary for the quick and effective delivery of humanitarian assistance in many parts of Africa. On the other hand, systems put in place to prevent mass locust infestation in north-western Africa have not been maintained.

A. Challenges

21. While the acute, complex and concurrent crises in Darfur, in the Indian Ocean region and elsewhere have brought to light the limitations of the current system, they also offer critical insight and lessons for how performance and service delivery might be improved.

Coordination capacity

22. Cooperation and collaboration of all stakeholders at the field level is crucial to ensuring that the system-wide capacity works effectively. Lack of sectoral coordination (both within and between sectors) can lead to gaps or overlap in coverage in some areas. Weaknesses in the coordination of military assets, logistics teams and standby arrangements often mean that critical assets and resources are not always used efficiently. Inconsistent planning between relief and recovery teams may undermine the credibility established by effective response and is critical to sustaining the well-being of the population. Coordination among local, national, regional and international response teams is essential, as the inevitable convergence of multiple response actors often complicates — rather than contributes to — the overall relief and recovery effort if roles and responsibilities are not clearly defined.

23. Such weaknesses in coordination capacity require establishing more routine and formalized approaches to sector coordination among United Nations agencies and partners and improving civil-military liaison to make the best and most appropriate use of what are critical assets. System-wide efforts should also be made to establish a broader common logistics and operational support infrastructure. Strategic planning is also critical to fitting early response efforts into overall relief priorities, risk reduction, resource mobilization and long-term planning. And creating "bottom-up" coordination approaches and structures that pro-actively involve and strengthen key local players from the outset will help ensure coherence and effectiveness throughout all phases of the recovery effort.

24. When the humanitarian effects of a crisis are beyond local capabilities to resolve, or in the case of natural disasters, when international help is requested, it is the United Nations country team of agencies, funds and programmes, that, under the leadership of the humanitarian coordinator is tasked with identifying, in collaboration with operational partners, the opportunities and constraints to effective humanitarian action. However, delays and gaps in response suggest a need to strengthen field coordination structures, including a more broadly based humanitarian country team, strengthening the leadership of the humanitarian coordinator and resident coordinator, and ensuring that sufficient and flexible resources are immediately available to support field structures adequately. Coordination would also be improved through the development of international

targets for the timeliness of response, the speed of disbursement and the predictability of support.

Surge capacity

25. Speed of deployment in emergencies and disasters is essential in ensuring effective coordination and timely service delivery. Though the humanitarian system's rapid response capacity was well demonstrated during the tsunami crisis, adequate deployment of appropriate staff and material resources to the Darfur crisis was less swift. Moreover, while common services — logistics, communication and information technology, and mine action — have become mission-critical to the movement of staff, resources, the identification and analysis of needs, and the delivery of assistance, such services need to be strengthened with additional, experienced staff, skilled in a variety of technical areas, capable of leading field operations and able to deploy at short notice. Finally, the provision of rapid financial analysis and close to real-time financial tracking is critical to enhancing the timing of the funding and, as a result, the quality of the response.

26. Improving humanitarian capacity therefore requires improved mechanisms and standby arrangements that can rapidly mobilize technical expertise. Efforts have been made on the part of the United Nations system to strengthen common services, improve emergency response rosters and make rapid deployment mechanisms more nimble. Several United Nations agencies have also responded swiftly to minimize the impact of landmines on civilian populations and the delivery of humanitarian assistance.

27. However, strengthening humanitarian response capacity also requires that the humanitarian community more easily draw upon the national expertise of countries that have rapid response experience. The United Nations has collaborated with Governments to establish standby arrangements for rapid staff deployment for assessments and for emergency staffing; certain Governments have also initiated standing arrangements for the rapid deployment of staff to augment the surge capacities of United Nations agencies. Such arrangements should be strengthened further to work within — rather than in parallel with — United Nations rapid response mechanisms.

Sectoral capacity

28. Significant capacity gaps exist in water and sanitation, shelter and camp management, and protection, and such weaknesses are consistent across both disasters and emergencies. In some instances, such failings are attributable to gaps in mandate. In other cases, the humanitarian response system lacked the presence, skills and experience to perform required functions. In all cases, such weaknesses have delayed response, prevented adequate coverage and reduced the system's ability to ensure equity in the distribution of aid. There is therefore a need to reinvest in developing and maintaining systemic capacity for humanitarian response by increasing and strengthening professional staffing in key sectors, by improving common logistics and communications services and by forming and supporting strategic partnerships that tap into the large response capacity of NGOs and draw on the existing expertise of local and regional organizations. Because the protection of civilians is a responsibility that lies squarely with States, enhancing the protection of civilians requires that Member States commit to preventing and addressing the

implications of such violence — in the retraining of the national army and police to create a security sector trained in human rights law, in the demobilization and reintegration of former combatants, in the development of programmes to support women's economic empowerment and in the provision of access to medical and psychological services to victims and survivors of sexual violence. In support of these efforts, the humanitarian system must work to fill protection gaps by improving expertise, agreeing to attendant roles and responsibilities and increasing the capacity of regional organizations to act as protection forces.

Financial capacity

29. The way humanitarian crises are funded affects the system's ability to respond promptly, effectively and in a principled and impartial manner. Moreover, timely, adequate and predictable funding improves the Organization's ability further to develop and maintain response capacity where it is currently inadequate. There are many situations where crises develop or escalate rapidly, where a rapid deployment of staff in critical sectors is required or where the needs in underreported countries or sectors may go unnoticed but require substantial amounts of support. In a sudden-onset disaster, flash appeals may be too late in coming and current emergency response mechanisms, such as the Central Emergency Revolving Fund and the Emergency Response Fund, were developed more than a decade ago and may have become inadequate to the scale and speed today's crises require.

30. At the global level, improving financial capacity means (a) enabling an immediate response (e.g. providing start-up funds before pledges become liquid and providing funds when unanticipated developments lead to an increased need for humanitarian activities), (b) introducing a mechanism to ensure equitable funding of crises and of sectors to ensure funding for neglected emergencies and (c) providing funds to build up capacity to address gaps (e.g. protection, camp management).

National and local capacity

31. Building national and local preparedness and response capacity is key to a more effective response effort; engaging national and local actors in the response phase ensures that relief efforts contribute to long-term recovery. In the case of large-scale natural disasters, national and local response teams are often the most effective at carrying out rapid assessments and coordinating the initial response because they can more easily overcome obstacles that beset their international counterparts. In the context of complex emergencies, national ownership and leadership in the post-conflict phase is critical to the consolidation of peace and to building consensus around development priorities, roles, responsibilities and resources. In both emergencies and disasters, partnering with community members will facilitate long-term sustainability.

32. All too often, national and local institutions lack adequate capacity to address such humanitarian crises. When building the capacity of the humanitarian system, attention should be given to mobilizing and supporting existing capacities, knowledge and institutions through the transfer of technology and know-how and through public education. Donors and affected Governments should commit to investing much more in disaster preparedness.

B. Ways forward

33. The United Nations humanitarian response system was designed well over a decade ago and was reformed more than seven years ago. In many areas, it has stood the test of time. However, the complexity of the environment in which we now work, combined with the experiences of the past few years, dictate that we update our systems and strategies and upgrade our mechanisms and tools so that what was developed in the 1990s will be more effective in today's environment.

Humanitarian response review

34. One way forward is to examine the system's core competencies. In light of the high current levels of humanitarian demand, it is evident that there is a critical need to identify those factors that have hindered the speed and effectiveness of humanitarian response, including in the area of protection, and ensure that appropriate steps are taken to improve the timeliness and impact of humanitarian actions.

35. There are also a number of new proposals and initiatives for strengthening humanitarian capacity that might have a far-reaching effect on the humanitarian effort on a worldwide scale. Such proposals should be examined as critical opportunities to strengthen global humanitarian response capacity in a few key areas and should be evaluated in the context of how that may contribute to and improve the emergency response system of the United Nations overall.

36. To this end, the Emergency Relief Coordinator, based on his mandate in resolution 46/182, initiated an independent in-depth system-wide review of humanitarian response capacities. The review will analyse the overall humanitarian response capacities as well as the potential resources available to meet future demands for assistance and protection. The focus of the review will give attention primarily to the capacities of the United Nations, international NGOs and the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. This should help achieve a common understanding of both the current response capacity and available expertise and of how the humanitarian system can effectively mobilize and deploy them. In addition, it will identify possible gaps in expertise and resources and recommend measures that need to be taken to address the shortcomings. The results of the review should be available in the summer of 2005.

New partnerships

37. Recent events have also demonstrated key areas where capacity can be strengthened through partnerships. Improved partnerships between humanitarian and development actors would improve the handover from the immediate response to recovery programmes. Partnerships within the system may be necessary to overcome those gaps in assistance — such as protection and camp management in situations involving internally displaced persons — that do not enjoy leadership from any one agency. Partnerships with Governments can serve to help build their own capacity to manage and mitigate humanitarian crises, as well as enhance rapid response capacity and expertise of international structures by providing human, technical and material resources. Partnerships and formal engagement with regional organizations would help boost the system's ability to perform key tasks that are

often beyond the ability of humanitarian agency staff to provide but that benefit the delivery of assistance overall (e.g. security).

38. Whereas up to now the role of the private sector in providing humanitarian assistance has been limited, the tsunami crisis opened up opportunities for this sector to play an important role in the humanitarian field. Increased private sector engagement in humanitarian operations raises coordination questions that should be further evaluated.

IV. Follow-up to humanitarian resolutions and the "organizational aspects" of intergovernmental dialogue

39. The effectiveness of humanitarian work, however, is not simply a matter of capacity; it also depends on the relevance of Member State dialogue, the focus and strength of intergovernmental resolutions and the ability of the United Nations system to "operationalize" such resolutions in terms of activities on the ground.

40. The recognition of this fact prompted Member States during the humanitarian affairs segment of the 2004 session of the Economic and Social Council to request a progress report on three years of Council resolutions on strengthening the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations (resolutions 2002/32, 2003/5, 2004/50) to monitor follow-up and to better understand where and how resolutions may have had an impact on the humanitarian policy and practice of the United Nations. Subsequently, the General Assembly, in paragraph 4 of its resolution 59/141, emphasized the importance of the discussion of humanitarian policies and activities in the Assembly and in the Economic and Social Council and that those discussions be further revitalized by Member States.

A. Follow-up to humanitarian resolutions of the Economic and Social Council

41. General Assembly resolution 46/182 stipulated that the Secretary-General update Member States annually on humanitarian assistance through the Economic and Social Council. The humanitarian affairs segment of the Council was subsequently established by the Secretary General's reform of 1997 to "give guidance on overall humanitarian issues and coordination" (see A/51/950, para. 193) with a view to improving the management and coherence of United Nations system humanitarian activities. Since then, the humanitarian affairs segment has served as a central discussion forum on thematic humanitarian issues, resulting in two agreed conclusions (1998/1 and 1991/1), two chairman's summaries and three resolutions (2002/32, 2003/5 and 2004/50). During the past three years, these resolutions have broadly focused on the following themes:

- Coordination and response to emergencies and disasters
- Resource mobilization and humanitarian financing
- Transition from relief to development
- Protection and internal displacement
- Sexual exploitation and gender-based violence
- Disaster preparedness and risk reduction
- Gender mainstreaming
- National capacity-building and participation
- Safety and security of humanitarian personnel.

A detailed list of actions taken up in relation to humanitarian resolutions during the past three years can be found in the matrix that has been submitted as a conference room paper as a supplement to the present report (A/60/CRP.1).

B. Impact of humanitarian resolutions

42. The implementation of humanitarian resolutions, however, is only relevant if the actions that result from them lead to concrete improvements in the coordination or delivery of humanitarian assistance at headquarters or on the ground. Though such "impact" is hard to measure, as policy or programming progress is often driven (or constrained) by a variety of factors, sources and inputs, it is possible to evaluate whether and how the discussions and resolutions of the Economic and Social Council have influenced humanitarian policy and practice by analysing the Council's approach to the following thematic issues.

Humanitarian coordination

43. As articulated in resolution 46/182, the coordination of actions and actors in the often confusing aftermath of a natural disaster or the management of the multiplicity of needs in a complex emergency is critical to the overall effectiveness of response. In the context of the transition from relief to development in both post-disaster and post-conflict situations, coordination is also essential to shifting ownership from international to national actors, to ensuring that stop-gap processes are phased out in favour of enduring structures and to guaranteeing that resources are systematically mobilized and equitably applied to meet a range of needs. In past recommendations, the Secretary-General has therefore encouraged States to recognize the need for strengthened coordination mechanisms and management.

44. Economic and Social Council support to strengthening humanitarian coordination, however, remains uneven. While Member States have consistently reaffirmed the lead role of the Emergency Relief Coordinator in humanitarian response, humanitarian resolutions have stopped short of strengthening the resident coordinator/humanitarian coordinator system that extends such leadership to the field. Annual affirmations in the resolutions of the United Nations coordinating role in disaster response have been met instead with the creation of regional initiatives to develop parallel disaster response and coordination structures outside the United Nations system. Economic and Social Council resolutions, however, have rightly emphasized the importance of building regional, national and local capacity to both effectively prepare for, manage and mitigate disasters and to lead the coordination of post-conflict and post-disaster phases. While NGOs have been consistently good at building local and national humanitarian response capacity in a variety of contexts, the United Nations must do much more and in a more systematic manner.

45. As the thematic cornerstone of the Council's humanitarian affairs segment, strengthening the coordination of humanitarian response in the context of disasters and complex emergencies is of primary and central concern. Such concern should be met with more focused intergovernmental attention in the form of support to those coordination mechanisms and structures that enhance the overall performance of the humanitarian system.

Resource mobilization and humanitarian financing

46. Despite generous pledges from donors in response to major crises during the past three years, funding for humanitarian assistance continues to be low, delayed and unevenly applied. The reasons for this are various, but are due, in part, to inconsistencies in the identification and prioritization of needs, the tracking and analysis of aid flows and the way such funds are sourced and disbursed.

47. While such problems had been diagnosed by the United Nations system and by donors, raising such concerns to the Economic and Social Council has contributed to policy progress in this area in substantial ways. Council debates and resolutions helped to reframe the funding agenda by successfully linking humanitarian financing with the effectiveness of assistance. The Council's endorsement of the Good Humanitarian Donorship initiative has helped to broaden the debate outside donor circles, offered policy directives that have encouraged behavioural shifts and prompted discussions within donor countries and among donor groups that have led to improvements, notably to a higher rate of conversion of pledges to cash-in-hand.

48. Economic and Social Council resolutions have also lent critical intergovernmental weight to specific, technical actions towards improving both funding levels and the conditions under which such funding is sourced, allocated and managed. Economic and Social Council attention has helped launch internal processes to find common definitions of humanitarian assistance and to strengthen the analysis and reporting mechanisms for documenting, comparing and presenting needs assessments across emergencies. Council resolutions calling for the strengthening of the consolidated appeals process has helped to support United Nations-donor initiatives to improve the reporting of financial contributions and strengthen the presentation and analysis of funding patterns found therein. Improvements in the financial tracking system continue today with help from PriceWaterhouseCoopers, which has donated 8,000 man-hours to both a forensic analysis of current humanitarian aid flows for the tsunami crisis and to provide technical expertise to the system as a whole.

49. However, Economic and Social Council resolutions have had only a marginal impact on funding patterns in the areas of neglected emergencies, underresourced sectors and funding gaps, particularly for post-disaster recovery. It is in these areas that more support from Member States is needed.

Transition

50. During the past few years, countries emerging from crisis and recovering from natural disasters have required that the Council's humanitarian affairs segment focus not only on addressing enduring life saving needs, but also on identifying ways to help Governments restore authority and the rule of law, rebuild basic infrastructure and build back the livelihoods in what are fragile "transitional" phases.

51. Though the issue of the transition from relief to development had been on the intergovernmental agenda since the early 1990s, progress on it had lost momentum, as discussions tended to focus on United Nations processes, tools and internal concerns. Renewed attention to the issue in the Economic and Social Council during the past three years, which coincided with the need to support work in Afghanistan, has allowed the United Nations to revitalize the transitions discussion by promoting better coordination in transition environments, including with the international

financial institutions, and to shift the debate, refocusing transition priorities to the development of policy and processes aimed to support State ownership and leadership and, in the case of post-disaster transitions, the need to avoid reinforcing risk.

52. Though many positive initiatives have been launched to improve coordination in transitions, the humanitarian affairs segment has not managed to engage the international financial institutions successfully in getting them to relate more coherently to the United Nations humanitarian and development partners. However, significant post-conflict and post-disaster activities are ongoing in many areas of the world and require material, financial and policy support. It remains unclear what direction the humanitarian affairs segment should take with regard to transition.

Protection and internal displacement

53. Civilian victims of conflict are often forced from their homes, denied access to life-saving food, medicine and shelter and may become the primary target of attacks motivated by ethnic or religious hatred, political infighting or the ruthless pursuit of economic interests. Civilians affected by disasters have lost — often in an instant — not only their homes and belongings, but also their social networks and means of economic survival. Protecting and assisting civilian victims of conflict and disasters is therefore critical to restoring the human capital and capacity of a country. Though the primary responsibility for the protection of civilians rests with States, international support is often required, with the consent of national Governments or when the State cannot protect its citizens alone. With an estimated 50 million persons internally displaced by conflicts and disasters worldwide, protecting and assisting internally displaced persons is particularly important to stabilizing affected countries and restoring economic and social life.

54. Despite the fact that Member States have condemned certain armed groups — notably the Revolutionary United Front in Sierra Leone and the Lord's Resistance Army in Uganda — for egregious acts of violence against civilians, both protection and internal displacement remain contentious topics in the Economic and Social Council. Fears of "humanitarian intervention" elsewhere in the United Nations have overshadowed the protection debate.

55. Fundamental to the issue of protection is access, and this is where humanitarian resolutions have had a role to play. By reaffirming the responsibility of all parties to conflict to ensure the safe and unhindered access of the affected community to humanitarian assistance, and by reminding neighbouring States of their responsibility to facilitate the transit of such assistance, the Economic and Social Council has acted as a valuable advocacy tool on behalf of the humanitarian community. While the Council has been instrumental in raising awareness, it has been unable to "operationalize" such principles in the form of actions on the ground. Access continues to be routinely denied by Governments and armed groups in some crises and the Council has been unable to address critical protection needs, such as management of internally displaced persons' camps and securing communities from the threat of sexual violence. Such issues need to be taken as seriously as material relief and require a less contentious intergovernmental approach.

Gender-based violence, including sexual exploitation and abuse

56. Sexual and gender-based violence continues to be used as a weapon of war as women, girls — and some men and boys — are beaten, raped and humiliated as a means of asserting power, breaking community ties and degrading human dignity. The prevailing culture of impunity in many situations further reinforces these developments. Survivors and victims of such attacks often suffer from serious health consequences and rejection by the community; economic exclusion and social constraints often dissuade victims from seeking or receiving help. Sexual exploitation and abuse of civilians by peacekeeping or humanitarian personnel in crises is also an issue of grave concern, but one where allegations of such conduct have prompted action by the United Nations and the humanitarian community.

57. The Economic and Social Council has consistently raised these issues, although with varying impact. Though the Council called upon States to adopt preventive measures and effective responses to sexual violence and to ensure that those responsible are brought to justice, such a directive has not translated into either preventive or punitive measures on the part of States. The role the Council has played on the issue of sexual exploitation on the part of United Nations humanitarian and military staff, however, has been a positive one, reinforcing the specific actions already under way and lending support and momentum to important policy processes. For example, when efforts were under way to implement the standards developed by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, it was important to have the strong language in Council resolutions when developing the Secretary-General's bulletin on special measures against sexual exploitation and abuse and when following up with the United Nations system and with NGOs on adopting standards developed by the Standing Committee as part of their own codes of conduct.

58. The use of sexual and gender-based violence as a weapon of war is a worrying, enduring problem that should remain firmly on the intergovernmental humanitarian agenda. Ending the culture of impunity that allows such violence to occur should be consistently reinforced by Member States. There is also a need for the more determined engagement of Government with civil society and the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies to help societies mitigate the effects of such violence, including in the field of health education. Keeping the issue of sexual exploitation of humanitarian staff on the agenda of the Economic and Social Council will continue to be important in continually reinforcing ongoing efforts being undertaken by the system.

Disaster response and risk reduction

59. The intensity, frequency and geographic scale of today's disasters require extraordinary levels of coordination to manage the proliferation of relief actors and actions and attend to a wide range of needs and circumstances. Effective management of disasters also requires consideration of risk and vulnerability and investment in risk reduction activities as part of response, recovery and development plans.

60. Economic and Social Council resolutions have been instrumental in promoting specific operational initiatives to improve the speed and effectiveness of international disaster assistance by calling for the strengthening of international urban search and rescue and, together with the efforts of such other organizations as

the International Telecommunication Union and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), by consistently encouraging States to ratify or accede to the Tampere Convention on the Provision of Telecommunication Resources for Disaster Mitigation and Relief Operations. These efforts proved successful, as membership in the International Search and Rescue Advisory Group has broadened and the Tampere Convention entered into force in January 2005. The Council has also supported the work being led by IFRC on the development of "guiding principles and practice on international disaster response".

61. The Economic and Social Council has also been instrumental in lending strategic policy support to humanitarian issues taken up in the General Assembly. While disaster reduction is an issue also taken up in the Assembly each year, the Council has been able to reinforce risk reduction policy messages by asking the Assembly to give priority to integrating disaster risk reduction strategies into relevant legal, policy and planning instruments. This has been done mainly through the implementation of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, reinforced by the Hyogo Framework for Action, agreed upon at the World Conference on Disaster Reduction, held in Japan in January 2005.

Observations

62. The foregoing analysis of the role of the Economic and Social Council on a variety of humanitarian policy issues suggests that policy progress in some areas is easier than in others. Most importantly, it suggests that the Council has a role to play when its reporting, discussions and resolutions are clear in their intent and focus. Below are some general observations about the role of the Council and its impact on humanitarian coordination and assistance based on its performance during the past three years.

Broad policy dialogue

63. The value of the Economic and Social Council with respect to humanitarian assistance and coordination continues to be its inclusiveness as an annual platform that brings together United Nations agencies, NGOs and donor and recipient countries on issues that constrain humanitarian work. Though the Council does not serve to identify policy problems and seldom initiates policy initiatives, it has had a role to play in broadening policy debates when such issues require more broadly reflective perspectives, in reframing policy agendas when issues have been derailed and in bringing policy coherence to those areas that have fallen prey to internal debate. The codification of such discussions in the form of Council resolutions helps then to put intergovernmental weight behind critical policy priorities and activities, formalizing, endorsing and reinforcing actions already under way.

Progress and follow-up

64. The Economic and Social Council has also served as a means for tracking progress on humanitarian policy issues. Through annual reports of the Secretary-General, the United Nations system and its humanitarian partners report back to Member States on actions taken throughout the year, highlighting emerging challenges and trends. Through the adoption of humanitarian resolutions, Member States collectively endorse the policy priorities for the coming year. While such an exercise has intrinsic value, the process might be improved by a more strategic

focus of issues of concern in the reporting and in the resolutions, a more consistent approach to the way humanitarian discussions are introduced and shaped and a clearer division of labour between the work done in the Council and in the General Assembly to avoid overlap in reporting and resolution requirements. Though the foregoing examples demonstrate that it is easier to make policy progress in some areas than in others, where requested actions in resolutions are more specific, they work better. Moreover, the Council's effectiveness as a monitoring tool is contingent on its ability to promote accountability among all parts of the humanitarian system, including Member States, though the foregoing examples suggest it has been less successful in this regard. The Council would therefore benefit from broader Member State participation, particularly from those countries that are partners in or recipients of humanitarian assistance.

Promoting respect for humanitarian principles and law

65. Where Economic and Social Council resolutions have been less successful is in their ability to promote respect for humanitarian principles. While the Council's humanitarian resolutions routinely reaffirm humanitarian principles, the responsibilities of States with regard to international humanitarian law, human rights law and refugee law and key humanitarian guidelines and norms, the Council has failed to generate broad respect for such principles or promote compliance with them in terms of actions on the ground. Reinforcing the normative base is an important component of strengthening the humanitarian agenda that may require attention from a broader constituency than the Council can provide.

C. "Organizational aspects" of intergovernmental dialogue

66. The September summit meeting of Member States provides an important opportunity for clarifying, in particular, the respective roles that the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council should play with respect to humanitarian action and coordination. Such discussions might benefit from the following observations gleaned from experience with intergovernmental debates on humanitarian issues.

Making more strategic use of the Economic and Social Council would strengthen the humanitarian policy agenda

67. As demonstrated above, the Economic and Social Council is an important policy mechanism that would benefit from a more strategic vision and approach. Such an improved approach might (a) better define the role of the Economic and Social Council vis-à-vis that of the General Assembly and the Security Council with regard to humanitarian issues, (b) clearly and systematically identify and address gaps in the system and improve, rather than constrain, humanitarian action and (c) promote broad ownership of and accountability to issues of common concern. In particular, proposals to differentiate the work of the Economic and Social Council as a specialist technical development/humanitarian body from the substantive normative work of the Assembly would help in this regard.

The point of departure must always be what happens on the ground

68. Economic and Social Council discussions and resolutions are most effective when they are driven by issues and challenges arising from the field. The requests in Council resolutions that achieved the greatest impact were those that were rooted in and driven by field events and that had enough traction at the operational/agency and field levels to be brought forward. In this regard, concrete progress has been made in areas such as sexual exploitation and abuse, where critical thinking on a field imperative was formalized by the Council and then put to practical use. Similarly, the Council helped reinvigorate much-needed discussions on transitions, allowing the United Nations system, together with affected States, to "operationalize" some of the policy ideas into programming tools at the disposal of the entire system.

Put humanity first

69. It is in the name of our collective concern for the principle of "humanity" that the United Nations system — including its intergovernmental bodies — can make positive progress towards achieving humanitarian goals. However, this can only be achieved by reaffirming the role of the United Nations humanitarian community as acting on behalf of the needs of the vulnerable, and not the politics of States. Intergovernmental debates on humanitarian issues would be best served by a more broadly reflective agenda that allows States to move beyond self-interested positions and give in-depth consideration to those issues and events that challenge the Organization's ability effectively and responsibly to reduce pain and suffering on a worldwide scale.

V. Multidimensional missions

70. The past two years have seen an increase in the size, scale and scope of multidimensional peacekeeping operations. These developments have also resulted in the need to clarify relationships between the humanitarian, development, political and military elements of missions to better ensure that integration promotes coherence of approach when the various elements of the mission are mutually supportive and reinforcing.

71. Many humanitarian partners remain concerned that the nature and design of "integrated missions" have, in some cases, had an adverse impact on humanitarian operations. Specific concerns exist about the confusion of roles between military and humanitarian actors where quick-impact projects and "hearts and minds" campaigns take place alongside humanitarian programmes. Many non-United Nations humanitarian partner organizations have also been opposed to humanitarian coordination being fully integrated into peacebuilding and peacekeeping missions, fearing that this will have an adverse impact on their ability to assist those in need in accordance with humanitarian principles.

72. A recent independent study commissioned by the expanded Core Group of the Executive Committee on Humanitarian Affairs entitled, Report on Integrated Missions: Practical Perspectives and Recommendations, identified a number of ways that the United Nations could better harness its resources to respond more efficiently and comprehensively in peacekeeping and peacebuilding situations and offered the following conclusions:

- In many circumstances, especially where there is no clear-cut distinction between active conflict and post-conflict, humanitarian actors may need uninterrupted access to all areas and communications with all actors. Therefore, mission mandates need to recognize humanitarian principles and mission design must be sufficiently flexible to ensure that the humanitarian operating environment is protected and allow for the incorporation of relevant aspects of United Nations country team capacities into operational plans.

- Humanitarian principles could be more actively safeguarded by enabling the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General responsible for humanitarian and development activities to review quick-impact projects and hearts and minds activities to ensure that they did not conflict with humanitarian activities.

- In general terms, the study recognizes the need for an agreed definition of integrated missions to better define when and how multidimensional peacekeeping operations should be applied.

- The planning and design processes are critical to effective harmonious integration and need to draw more effectively on the experience of the pre-existing United Nations country team.

- The human rights system of the United Nations is also often called upon to play the dual roles of supporting transitional processes as well as monitoring and reporting on overall human rights developments. Mission structures must also be sufficiently flexible to enable human rights actors to meet their principled and mandate-based obligations while simultaneously supporting transitional processes.

- The study also recognizes that multidimensional peacekeeping operations operate in rapidly changing political environments. For this reason, it is important to ensure regular review of both mission mandates and the appropriateness of mission structures to deliver on the agreed objectives. The regular review of major peacekeeping operations is a proposed function for the Peacebuilding Commission.

VI. Update on the use of the Central Emergency Revolving Fund and emergency cash grants

73. The Central Emergency Revolving Fund (CERF) is a cash-flow mechanism under the authority of the Under-Secretary-General/Emergency Relief Coordinator and administered by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs to bridge the gap between needs and available funding throughout a crisis. Funded by donors, CERF monies are released to United Nations operational agencies at the outset of a crisis and sometimes during later phases to assist agencies with cash-flow problems before donor contributions become available. The mechanism requires that agencies pay back the loan within one year. Disbursement is usually within four to five days and loans are normally repaid within six months.

74. The Fund, which was created by the General Assembly in its resolution 46/182, was originally intended for use during the initial phase of complex emergencies. Its use was later expanded by the Assembly in its resolution 56/107 to

include disaster response, to address new requirements in the context of protracted emergencies and to support emergency staff safety arrangements for United Nations and associated personnel. Since its establishment in 1992, 18 United Nations agencies have accessed the fund 201 times and borrowed more than $318 million, of which $306.7 million has been reimbursed. Since June 2004, $20.9 million has been borrowed and $9.4 million reimbursed, primarily to respond to the crisis in the Sudan.

75. In the immediate aftermath of a natural disaster, the United Nations can provide emergency cash grants to countries affected by natural disasters. These grants are particularly effective because they can be used rapidly for the local purchase and delivery of life-saving relief supplies. Humanitarian crises during the past several years demonstrated that the $50,000 ceiling, which was authorized by the General Assembly in its resolution 38/202 of 20 December 1983, was insufficient to be effective in the absence of alternative means of immediate relief. In light of this observation, Member States, through Economic and Social Council resolution 2004/50, recommended that the General Assembly authorize the increase of this ceiling. Taking their lead from the Council, Member States, in Assembly resolution 59/141, decided to raise the limit of an emergency cash grant to $100,000 per country, per disaster, within the existing resources available from the regular budget.

Expanded CERF (e-CERF)

76. Though CERF and the emergency cash grant system remain important standby resource mechanisms in times of severe emergencies, consistent and timely response to humanitarian emergencies and disasters requires more robust financial mechanisms that can ensure adequate, predictable and flexible funding to enable an immediate response, provide funding for neglected emergencies and address sectoral gaps.

77. Expanding the scope and use of the current CERF will address the problems of slow and inequitable response. An expanded CERF (e-CERF) would build on the existing revolving fund mechanism to include a loan capacity and a grant component, both of which could be used for (a) immediate need (e.g. sudden onset natural disaster or conflict), (b) unanticipated costs, or (c) funding for neglected emergencies. More stringent criteria would be established for approval of grants vs. loans and a detailed mechanism for approval should be elaborated and approved by the General Assembly. A funding conference will be held for the e-CERF annually or every two years.

VII. Recommendations

Strengthen humanitarian response capacity by broadening the capacity base and improving expertise and performance benchmarks

78. There is significant deployable capacity within the system. However, such capacity is unpredictable, thin and relies on too small a core. In the event of a major crisis, the humanitarian system is often unable to pull together the right combination of expertise within the right time frame and, when doing so, will rely on the same group of people. Deployable capacity does — or did — exist, however, in countries where there are high levels of established humanitarian need, such as those in

Africa. Strengthening the capacity of the humanitarian system requires both expanding the mechanisms that can ensure appropriate and predictable deployment and tapping into existing skills and expertise to "thicken" its deployable base.

79. Significant capacity gaps exist in the areas of water and sanitation, shelter and camp management and protection. Such patterns of performance are consistent across both disasters and emergencies and are caused by a variety of factors, including limited deployable expertise and lack of predictable funding. Identifying the requisite skills and developing and funding a "preparedness capacity" in the areas of water and sanitation, health and, particularly, camp management, in crises, would help ensure better coverage in these sectors. Sectoral performance will also be improved by establishing clearer performance targets and indicators, such as were established to positive effect in the Sudan by the United Nations country team responding to the Sudan real-time evaluation.

- Expand and sustain essential common humanitarian services so that they can be predictably deployed and with the right combination of skills.
- Systematically engage to build and re-establish regional, national and local humanitarian response capacities so that the humanitarian system has immediate access to deployable resources in areas where humanitarian needs are demonstrably high, particularly in Africa.
- Identify and/or develop specialist technical expertise for major crises in water and sanitation, shelter and camp management and protection, and request the humanitarian response review to recommend the best mechanisms for achieving this objective.
- Establish finance mechanisms at the country level that ensure that critical gaps are immediately addressed.
- In sudden-onset disasters, establish performance benchmarks for the first four weeks. In complex crises, establish benchmarks from the outset of response.

Improve coordination by making more efficient use of the resources we have

80. The tsunami crisis demonstrated that there are considerable assets within the humanitarian system that would benefit from improved standby and coordination mechanisms and many proposals and initiatives have been put forth in this regard. However, such assets would be more efficiently used — and the humanitarian benefits would be potentially greater — if they are deployed under or coordinated with the United Nations and not run under their own steam. The United Nations should improve its ability to make the best use of humanitarian capacity at different levels, including regional capacity, by working out procedures where they can be deployed in a consistent manner to the benefit of affected populations. In addition, clearer and more formal coordination procedures and agreements with the military are essential.

- Establish improved mechanisms for the deployment of regional standby capacities under the leadership of the United Nations, such as through more formal agreements with regional organizations and the development of standard operating procedures for their deployment and coordination processes.

- Strengthen the procedures for the use and coordination of military assets and develop more systematic links with major providers.

- Strengthen support to resident/humanitarian coordinators and to United Nations country teams.

Strengthen financial mechanisms by expanding the use of CERF

81. The current configuration of CERF as a revolving fund remains a useful — but limited — financial instrument for humanitarian response. Though in the past it has provided temporary liquidity to humanitarian agencies, its current configuration does not allow it adequately to fill rapidly rising needs in the initial phases of an emergency, before an appeal is launched, and contributes to delays in initial response.

- Expand CERF (e-CERF) to include a grant facility component based on voluntary contributions as an advance of funds normally contributed through the consolidated appeals process, managed under the authority of the Secretary-General, the primary purposes of which are:

  – Developing and sustaining international, regional and national preparedness and standby capacity

  – Facilitating rapid deployment costs

  – Covering unanticipated increased need for essential humanitarian services

  – Addressing core needs in underfunded emergencies.

Preserve humanitarian space in integrated missions

82. The need to observe humanitarian principles in peacebuilding missions should be recognized in all mission mandates.

- Develop better mission guidelines and terms of reference so that the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General responsible for humanitarian and development activities has a clear responsibility for maintaining oversight over all quick-impact projects and hearts and minds activities that could have an impact on humanitarian action.

- As long as there is a humanitarian function, the official responsible for humanitarian coordination and his or her support office should reflect the interests of the wider humanitarian community; this may require that the coordination office is located separately from the main mission office to facilitate access for humanitarian actors.

- The humanitarian elements of the United Nations need to be more consistently engaged at the earliest stages of mission planning and design. This will require the establishment of a dedicated capacity drawn from United Nations humanitarian actors to work with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations.